

# CROAK

Toads Theatre Newsletter March 2024

FROM OUR CHAIRMAN



I'm going to unashamedly plug my own play Cash on Delivery which runs from 11th to 16th March. A typical farce that makes you forget everything bad and sad and just sit back and laugh.



Greetings dear Members,

Can someone please tell me when it's going to stop raining! Thank you.

The DYPT's production of A Midsummer Night's Dream was very well received and there were plenty of appreciative and complimentary comments.

Well done to all especially Heidi Pyburn who was at the helm. It's so important that we encourage the new generation of Toads into the fold. Thank you, Heidi, for continuing this journey.

Unfortunately, I didn't see it as I was locked *inside* my house that evening! The locksmith took 3 hours to unlock the front door and it cost me £293!

Paul Sylvester with his Lionel Richie Tribute was a knock out evening. The large audience were all up dancing at the end of the evening. I haven't witnessed that before; it's very satisfying that audiences are loving these tribute evenings despite some people not agreeing with them being held in our theatre. We make money, it brings new people to the theatre...what's not to like?

I'm very pleased to say that we have at least two new members who are training to be FOH Managers. Thank goodness. More please!

Paul Davenport's raffles to help the car park fund are going down well. The fund has a long way to go. We've had some good ideas for raising money but really need someone to take this on as a project. The committee is always busy so it would take a weight off our shoulders if someone would like to come forward...pretty please.

Think that's enough begging for now.

## **Good news!**

Alan Hargreaves has kindly sent me an update on Roy Winbow. He was deemed to be medically fit by Newton Abbot Hospital and is currently back in his flat, which is very good news! Roy doesn't feel well enough to take phone calls at the moment, but if you'd like to contact him, please message him on Facebook.

**Anna Reynolds**  
Chair

## Devon Young People's Theatre A Midsummer Night's Dream



### Thoughts...

Devon Young Peoples Theatre presented an abridged version of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* that included original music and Fairy dances.

This was a delightful version of the classic play, with young performers from 6 to 16 delivering Shakespeare's language in an energetic and charming way.

The charming set, including a beautiful fairy bower, worked well with the cleverly devised scene changes, creative projection and effective lighting.

All the classic characters of Puck, Oberon and Titania were ably supported by the younger members, who performed as fairies, and the other cast members.

Joby Wiggins (Puck) produced a standout performance causing his mischief on the orders of the stern Oberon (Joycelyn Green). Jayden Witt (Theseus Duke of Athens) and Honey Wiggins (Hippolyta) commanded the stage with their performances throughout the play. Cicely Hedges portrayed a beautiful Titania - ably supported by her fairy band.

The Lovers (Bea Corrine, Gwen Cruickshank, Alessia Cox and Solly Day-Stokoe) all brought the romance and warmth to the play alongside their dislike - then love - for one another, helped along (of course) by the mischievous Puck.

We must not forget 'our wretched actors (mechanicals)' (Harriet Tucker, Grace Davis, Barney Kelly, Vicki Cattoli, Georgia Dunn and Clara Wright). Their comedy was right on cue with every entrance and exit they made on stage.

(cont) The highlight of the evening was the play within a play with the Wall (Clara Wright) who played the inanimate object with such aplomb every night.

Then of course there is Bottom (Darjhe Gunasekara) Well, what can I say...! What a bundle of energy! Some adults would do well to take lessons from this young performer with his strong voice projection and clear diction...

This was a thoroughly enjoyable production that provided all the elements of the full version of the play. It had good comedy, excellent performances, and lovely dance routines.

Mention of the costume and make up team should be made, too.

A well-deserved congratulations to everyone involved in the production - and a sincere 'well done' to Hedi Pyburn for presenting such lovely young persons' production.

### Heard by Front of House

What a charming production.

I've performed with adults who cannot pronounce the lines as well as these children can!

Oh, the fairies were delightful!

There are some really talented individuals on that stage, I hope they stay and move up to the adult group!

Great costumes and make up, wow!

Loved the set and lighting!

### UP NEXT!



*Hello, Everyone!*

*I hope you enjoy reading this month's newsletter.*

*Any contributions for each month's edition need to be with me by 25<sup>th</sup> of the previous month and in WORD format or in the main body of an email, please – so over to you!*

*Mary Singleton (editor)*



### How's your Geography??

1. What is the capital city of Australia?
2. Which US state was Joe Biden born in?
3. Which UK city is situated further west – Bristol or Edinburgh?
4. What is the capital of Finland?
5. What is the currency of Vietnam?
6. What language is spoken in Brazil?
7. How many countries are there in the region of Europe? (Recognised by the United Nations)
8. If you completed the Three Peaks challenge, which three UK mountains would you have climbed?
9. What do the French call the English Channel?
10. How many permanent members are there on the UN security council?

Answers on p.7



## **CineMundi**

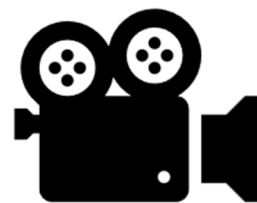
To mark the opening of “Cash on Delivery”, on March 11th at 10.00 for 10.30 am we are showing the back end of “Set a thief.....” about a retired cat burglar persuaded back into business by a soon-to-be Princess from the Isle of Man.

Open to all, coffee, cake and expanding company who appreciate a good film.

Get on the list to get the full - less cryptic- details.

[tltccinemundi@gmail.com](mailto:tltccinemundi@gmail.com)

Alistair & Nicola



## Wednesday Club

We started February with 'The Quintessential Quiz' compiled by Steve Gill. A good set of questions, and to cap it all, Suzy, Helen and I were the winners!

For Valentine's Day, we all confessed what 'Our Song' might be. This produced an interesting catalogue of musical memories, ranging from 'The Kinks' to classics! A very popular meeting which deserves repetition.

Austin Hawkins next presented Ken Russell's "Elgar", the famous documentary of the great composer, which went down well. Austin will soon be sharing his dvd on 'Delius' with us.

This week we have Gary Fremantle's reading of his novel, "Ogrefish". Suzy and I have read it... it's good. Copies will be available for sale.

Then Jim will give us another in his series of talks, this one is about The Alhambra, the beautiful palace in Spain, then the following week is free, but we'll think of something!

Our latest production, 'Cash on Delivery' will next be reviewed with members of the cast invited, and then our POETS' Friday meeting is on 22<sup>nd</sup> March; this time the theme is World Water Day.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> April we have a talk by Sally Arnold entitled 'Rock n' Roll Nanny', with a reading from her book of the same title. Anecdotes of Mick Jagger are expected.... I suppose that the most appropriate song for the children in Sally's charge would have been 'Under my Thumb'?!

Suzy and I are off for our annual trip to Lanzarote for several weeks in March, so thanks to those who have come forward to keep an eye on our unruly membership...pass the poisoned chalice!

John Miles.

## What's on in March

3<sup>rd</sup> March. Livermead House Hotel.  
**Spring Concert** by G and S

13-16<sup>th</sup> March. 7.30pm Sat mat 2.30pm.  
**'The Screwtape Letters'** by C.S. Lewis, Unleashed Theatre at The Royal Lyceum, Torquay.

11-16<sup>th</sup> March. 7.30pm Sat mat 2.30pm.  
**'Cash on Delivery'** by Michael Cooney, directed by Anna Reynolds.  
Toads Theatre Company. 01803 299330. [www.toadstheatre.co.uk](http://www.toadstheatre.co.uk)

14-16<sup>th</sup> March. 7.30pm.  
**'Play On'** by Rick Abbot, directed by Vanessa Fitzgerald. Project X at Brixham Theatre.

14-16<sup>th</sup> March. 7.30pm.  
**'Ladies down Under'** by Amanda Whittington, directed by Jan Pitwell.  
SADS. St John's Church Hall, Shiphay.TQ2 7HP.



**William Thomas Sanders  
(Bill)**

**13th March 1935 - 7th February 2024**

Bill Sanders passed away peacefully in his sleep on 7th February 2024, at the age of 88. Bill was born in Devon, then moved to Midlands in 1951 where he married Edith in 1957.

They retired to Devon in 1999.

They shared 63 years of a loving marriage raising two children, Carol and Diane, and becoming grandparents to Emma, Mark, Gemma and Chloe and Great-grandparents to Megan, Thomas, Harley, Ava-Rose, Grace, Nevaeh, Aubrey and Paisley.

Bill was accredited as a Methodist Local Preacher in 1967 and enjoyed preaching for over 50 years. He was also a MAYC youth club leader in Birmingham for many years, a bellringer and a keen interest in drama. He enjoyed playing cricket, tennis and in his younger years, rugby.

A celebration and thanksgiving service will be held on Friday 1st March 2024 at 12.30pm at Chasetown Methodist Church, Burntwood, Staffordshire. WS7 4TL

It will be live-streamed and the link at the bottom of the website [www.wtsanders.co.uk](http://www.wtsanders.co.uk) – password for live-stream is SA2024

## **Bill Sanders – A tribute**

I heard the sad news from Bill's daughter that he had died.

Bill was the FoH Manager to whom we spoke to enquire about joining Toads, back in 2011. He was a kindly, conscientious man, who took the unpredictable nature of his role calmly and, like his late wife, Edith, is fondly remembered.

After a spell in hospital in 2022, Bill moved to a care home in Chasetown, Staffs, close to his daughters where he passed away earlier this month.

It must have helped him to cope with his declining years, being close to family who loved and cared for him.

**Sherry Dudley**

## **Jack Jennings**

**Jack Jennings - thought to be the last surviving veteran of the infamous Burma Railway - has died aged 104.**

Jack Jennings, who was originally from the West Midlands, lived in Torquay for many years, where his remarkable life ended recently. He was 104 years old and was believed to be the last surviving veteran of around 60,000 prisoners from the WW2 Allied Forces who were made to build the infamous Thailand to Burma railway.

His funeral took place at The Little Theatre on 16<sup>th</sup> February.

A full report with pictures may be found on the BBC website.

[www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-68320016](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-devon-68320016)

## Joan Harrop

It was sad to learn of the death of Joan Harrop. She had been a Toads member since 1968. She was generous with time and possessions always pleased to share what she had. She played in several productions while Toads were at Babbacombe theatre; a memorable role was Hedda Gabler in David Gent's production. Many years later she played Aunt Tessman in the same play at the Little Theatre.

For a while Joan was responsible for publicity, rushing out in her lunch hour to distribute posters and fliers, risking the wrath of the headmaster if she was a few minutes late back.

Her husband Ken was a stalwart of the building team and made occasional appearances on stage. After he died Meg Horton, an older member, suggested it might be good therapy for Joan to research Toads early history. She entered into this project with great enthusiasm, travelling round to see earlier members with her tape recorder and notebook. This research became a book, still on view in the box office.

Joan enjoyed the social activities of the society and had many tales of parties in the Babbacombe days. Older members still talk of her meat and potato pies and her roast potatoes. She was regular member of the Wednesday club, enjoying the varied programme.

After a visit to the National Theatre to see Warhorse she became a fervent Michael Morpurgo fan, she collected all his books, travelled far and wide to hear his talks and maintained a regular correspondence with him. Sir Michael's appearance at her funeral would have been her greatest joy.

Though her last few years were difficult, most people's memory of Joan is that she was always laughing. She was a lady who was great fun.

## Cora Gant



## Answers:

1. Canberra
2. Pennsylvania
3. Edinburgh
4. Helsinki
5. Vietnamese dong
6. Portuguese
7. 44
8. Ben Nevis, Snowdon, Scafell Pike
9. la Manche
10. Five: China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States

**FOR YOUR INFORMATION**  
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